

**Bob Hardin Testimony**

In support of SB 407

Hearing before Senate Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Committee  
Tuesday, February 17, 2009, 3:00pm, Room 335, State Capitol

My name is Bob Hardin and I am the manager of Greenfields Irrigation District in Fairfield. Greenfields consists of three storage reservoirs that provide irrigation water to upwards of 600 users on 83,000 acres and is one of the largest irrigation districts in Montana.

Over the past 27 years that I have been employed by Greenfields we have been involved in numerous contracts with the Bureau of Reclamation. Other than an 8 million dollar Rehabilitation and Betterment project done in the early to mid 80's, these have been mainly Safety of Dams contracts where we are obligated, by the Safety of Dams Act, to pay 15% of any Safety of Dams project that is deemed necessary by the Bureau of Reclamation.

In 1926, Greenfields entered into an O&M contract with the United States which gave us, As a transferred works facility, the ability to be a self-sustaining irrigation district. We have since, repaid our original obligation to the United States but have not pursued transfer of title. Reclamation law is very specific when it comes to operation of an irrigation district. In accordance with Reclamation Law, Long term Repayment, Water Service, and O&M contracts require court confirmation to ensure that the district has been properly formed under state law and has taken proper steps to secure the approval of its members before executing the contract. SB 407 will limit the court confirmation process to these two factors and <sup>will</sup> only apply to long term contracts. The need for court confirmation, when it comes to Safety of Dams or other short term maintenance projects, is unnecessary as state law has outlined the process of establishing an irrigation district which allows the elected Board and members to make decisions which are in the best interest of the district.

**ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Greenfields Irrigation District supports Senate Bill 407.